possible to give any definite date and time for completion of the process of electoral reforms. Moreover, new issues keep coming up in the light of the experience gained in the election matters.

Overcrowding in Jails

5435. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the NHRC has recently asked all the Chief Justices of High Courts to tackle overcrowding in Jails and long pendency of cases;

(b) if so, whether the members of the NHRC visited prisons in various parts of the country and mismanagement of prison administration also came to their notice;

(c) whether in view of overcrowding in Jails the Government would extend assistance to High Courts by appointing additional judges etc. to dispose of the cases; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM JETHMALANI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Both Government and Judiciary are concerned with overcrowding in jails which is primarily due to the presence of large number of undertrial prisoners. The Supreme Court of India has recently issued some direction in the case — R.D. Upadhyay *Vs.* State of Andhra Pradesh and Others regarding speedy disposal of cases involving under trial prisoners.

The High Courts of Andhra Pradesh, Bombay, Calcutta, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Sikkim have informed that necessary steps are being teken to speed up the disposal of under trial cases.

The High Court of Delhi, *vide* its judgement dated 25.11.1999 in Crl. writ 681/99, Essang Nyong & Others *Vs.* State of New Delhi, has directed the State Legal Services Authority to explore the possibility of holding Lok Adalats for taking up the cases of prisoners involved in petty crimes.

In addition, the Government has been taking various steps for early disposal of cases including appointment of more Judges in High Courts on the basis of norms/workload.